186 was being devoted to the life and work of Doctor Skarina. Portraits 661 of him were printed in large quantities, and they decorated the halls of learned and cultural institutions, schools, museums, etc. There was a large plaster figure of him in the vestibule of the Institute of Belorussian Culture which in 1928 was transferred to the Academy of Sciences. After the proscription of National-Democracy the statue of the learned doctor of the sixteenth century was thrown out. Even the little statues of Skariny were destroyed, and a similar fate attended the portraits and statuettes of the other national hero, the leader of the Belorussian insurgents, K. Kalinovskii.

In order to compromise the National-Democrats and their 208 activities completely the new director of Narkomprosa[1] of the B. S. S. R., I. Gurskii, was ordered to have a play written with the appropriate content. Gurskii decided that he would write it himself and thus make his career. Not gifted with a dramaturgic abilities, he did not write a play but a worthless burlesque on people who had already seen the inside of G. P. U. cellars. Making use of his official position Gurskii compelled the First Theater to accept this talentless work for production. Enormous material resources were used in staging it, to the great detriment of the other theaters . . . However, neither material expenditures nor the director's efforts could help the play in the slightest. Gurskii portrayed the National-Democrats as drunkards and depraved elements. The attempt of the universally respected and talented poet, Ia. Kupala, to take his own life was depicted as the foolhardy escapade of a drunkard. After two or three performances, Gurskii's play, as obviously worthless, forced, and spurious, was withdrawn without any particular fuss, criticism, contrite admissions, or confessions of error on the part of the author . . . So the atempt to use the stage for persecuting the National-Democrats was for the present not crowned with success. From Soviet newspapers it has been ascertained that I. Gurskii recently "responded" with two plays on post-war kolkhoz life: Khleb /Bread / Svoi Liudi /One's Own People/. They met the same fate as his "response" of twenty-two years ago. /34/ They were panned by the critics and did not even get to the stage.

Simultaneously with the arrest of the National-Democrats 661 all of their writings were withdrawn from libraries, reading rooms, and general circulation, independently of whether or not they had any connection with the charges brought against the prisoners.

[1] [People's commissariat of Public Education - Analyst]